URBS BEATA

A VISION OF THE PERFECT LIFE

TOLMAN

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URBS BEATA

A Vision of the Perfect Life

—BY—

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WITH A COMMENDATORY

—BY THE—

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HERBERT CUSHING TOLMAN

TO

MY MOTHER AND MY WIFE.

COMMENDATORY.

IT IS a genuine pleasure to commend this little volume. Not only because of the intrinsic merit to be found on all its pages, but also because the reverend author and professor is a valued presbyter belonging to this Diocese; and one who here, seven years ago, when connected with our own State University at Madison, made his entrance into the Ministry of the Church, and received the Sacred Gift of Holy Order.

His growing sphere of duty has since called him to a distant and distinguished Institution, where his large attainments in letters, added to the spiritual gifts of his holy calling, make him an ever-increasing power for good.

We humbly ask God's blessing upon this endeavor to show the glories of the "Heavenly City" to the students of the University. And we are sure, the publishing of these short daily meditations will tend to deepen the spiritual lives of some others, whose privilege it may be, as ours has been, to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" them.

ISAAC LEA NICHOLSON.

Bishop's House, Milwaukee, Wis.,
Nativity St. John Baptist, 1902.

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FOREWORD.

THESE are a few very familiar and simple five-minute talks to College students at Morning Prayers. They represent one month at the University Chapel. I do not believe there is a more sacred or responsible calling than to be a teacher of young men. God grant that by life and precept we may inspire those under our instruction with a sense of the dignity and divineness of life. May they realize at the outset that the immortal life begins here and now, and that Christianity is the Christ life in the soul.

HERBERT CUSHING TOLMAN.

Vanderbilt University,
June 1, 1902.

URBS BEATA.

I.

I Saw the Holy City.

THE VISION: It is a true saying that the eye sees only what it brings to itself the power to see.

So many go through a spring day heedless of the song of birds, unobservant of the flowers and trees, seeing not the cloud shadows resting on the hills or the glories of the sunset.

On how many ears are the rapturous symphonies of a Beethoven but dull sounds!

Far truer is it in the spiritual world. Life is a divine vision, but how few grasp it!

The noble life is the life of exalted vision; the narrow life is the life of contracted vision; the dissolute life is the life of perverted vision.

In Dante's *Paradiso* the nine spheres around the God of glory are adapted, each to the capacity of the class of saint to receive the vision of God. This is not, as Lowell truly points out, merely a picture of the future life, but a symbol of the present state of the soul.

Is it not true that the highest vision of God comes to us at the highest point in our development?

An artist sees in the landscape, beauties and glories which my untrained eye cannot see, and so he comes nearer to the God of Beauty.

In your work to-day as college students, you must come nearer to truth, but nearer to truth means nearer to the God of Truth. And in that divinest of all our capacities, love, do we not, as we give forth love, increase in love and so come nearer to that loving heart of God?

So many students seem to take, as the motto of life, Horace's *nil admirari;* they appear to act and speak as if there were nothing in life to wonder at, nothing to admire.

Lack of admiration, or pretended lack of admiration, is no virtue; it is no sign of a wise man. It is the mark either of stupidity or conceit.

He most of all sees with the great world vision of the divine Christ, who beholds in life much to admire, ay, who beholds much to love.

The pupil of the eye is a very tiny thing, yet there enter into it, if we will let them, the wonders of the physical world. So the soul of man, a thing so small in this infinite universe, is capable of receiving into itself the transcendent glories of God. But remember that the process is gradual and demands effort. We do not see the beauties of nature all at once. Observation and study are required.

Spiritual vision is no exception to this law.

Man's highest endeavors cannot attain, nor eternity reveal, the fulness of God.

Yet he comes nearest to God who sees Him best.

Note these remarkable words—which I render somewhat freely—of Professor Harnack to the students of the University of Berlin:

"Thirty years of experience have taught me that knowledge is a mighty force, but yet it can give no answer to the great question Whence and Whither. It rectifies the delusion of sense, discovers error, supplies new facts. But it is only

the vision which comes on the mountain-tops of our inner lives, the vision of those high ideals, those noble purposes, those guiding forces out of which we are to make our real selves, that leads to the great Reality, God."

The life which has once caught this holy vision, can never remain the same, but is forever new.

II.

New Jerusalem.

NEWNESS OF LIFE: Life grows only by the renewing of itself.

Every thought we think, every book we read, every duty we do, every kindness we render, makes us new men.

After the commission of any act, we can never be as we were before. Our experiences become ourselves.

We can believe the declaration of an idealistic philosophy as given by Professor James, that, "the whole world of natural experience, as we get it, is but a time-mask, shattering or refracting the one infinite Thought, which is the sole reality, into those millions of finite streams of consciousness known to us as our private selves."

Our present makes our future; and the words of Emerson are true, that "he who would be a great soul in the future must be a great soul now."

The tree is new each day because it takes on new growth.

"We can imagine," says Gordon, "kinship between the flower and the star, because both are beautiful, or between the acorn and the oak, because there lies in the acorn the capacity for a magnificent life; but between the existence that is necessarily self-seeking, and the Eternal Love, there can be no fellowship."

I saw in the Acropolis Museum at Athens, an archaic sitting statue of Athene. As a work of art it was uncouth and grotesque. Straight lines marked the folds in the drapery. A silly smile upon the lips was the effort of the sculptor to give animation to the face. The Aegis, as a huge stone rested upon the breast. But without the rude figure, do you think the Athene Parthenos would have been a reality? It was because the Greek art was new daily that Phidias could give an image of the Olympian Zeus so majestic and so calm that a worshipper, as in a holy place, exclaimed:

"Oh, Phidias, either Zeus came down from Heaven to reveal to thee his likeness, or thou didst ascend into Heaven and behold him there."

It is the glory of life, that it is new every day; new in its hopes, its endeavors, its trials. The old philosopher, Solon, reckoned the days of an average life at 26,250, and yet no day was the same as another.

His life is dead to whom each day is not as a new life.

Phillips Brooks once said to the Harvard students:

"A new heaven and a new earth must come when a new man comes to claim it. The only way for us to make a new world is to be forever new men."

The life new and ever renewed is the New Jerusalem that comes down from God.

III.

Coming down out of Heaven from God.

DIVINENESS OF LIFE: Our lives not only depend on God, but they partake of the divine nature. In the sublime poetry of Wordsworth,

> "Trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, Who is our home."

It is a philosophical truth, that, "we lie in the lap of an immense intelligence which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves but allow a passage of its beams."

As applied to life, we should think of the Holy City not merely as a place, where, if we enter, we shall be in a condition of perfect felicity. He

who should enter Heaven unfit for it would be of all men most miserable.

Let us in our brief talks consider the Holy City as the state of the soul fitted to commune with God.

Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine, Thomas More, all endeavored to picture an ideal commonwealth.

But the Holy City is no external thing.

The Kingdom of God—that expression oftenest on the lips of Christ—is within man. It is the divine life of the soul.

Is not the definition true that the perfect life is that which is in perfect accord with a perfect environment?

Heaven is a life in perfect accord and perfect communion with God. As the Persian poet sang:

"I sent my soul through the invisible,
Some letter of that after life to spell;
By and by my soul returned to me
And answered, 'I myself am Heaven or Hell.'"

St. John saw the Holy City having the glory of God.

How grand and wonderful is this symbol of the soul! Each one of us must ask himself:

"Does my life show God's glory? Will others

see there the divine beauty and so bear witness that we have been with Jesus?"

Every life is a continuous revelation of God.

What Professor Herrmann says of the Church is equally applicable to the individual, that the exposition of the Gospel of our Lord is through the life which one develops out of the treasure which he posssesses.

Our lives are true because God is true. They are beautiful, because God is beautiful. They are loving because God is love. And they are holy because God is holy. Is this beatific vision becoming daily more and more a reality within ourselves? If so, we have entered upon, and are living, the immortal life, and our souls are being made ready for oneness with the Divine.

IV.

Made Ready as a Bride Adorned for her Husband.

ONENESS WITH CHRIST: "I want to tell you a story," says Socrates, "which you may regard as an old wife's tale, but I consider a true story.

"It is said that in the days gone by the superintendents of both the Islands of the Blessed and of Tartarus came to the Lord of Heaven and complained that mortals were coming to them unworthy of the place whither they were sent; men were going to the Islands of the Blest who ought to have gone to Tartarus, and men were going to Tartarus who ought to have gone to the Islands of the Blest."

"'I know this is going on,' the Lord replied,

'and the reason is that mortals are judged here on earth just before death, and they who judge them are living judges of living men. Now the human senses, the eye, the ear, etc., are hindrances to them, and besides that, witnesses come forward to testify to their noble birth and their virtuous lives.

" 'But I have put a stop to all this, for I have ordered the trial to take place after death, so the naked soul may judge the naked soul stripped of all adornments of earth.'

"The Judge shall look upon a soul, but he will not know whose soul it is; it may be the soul of a very powerful man; it may be that of the great king himself; but he will only see that the soul is unsound and scarred in consequence of acts of sin, and he sends it to Tartarus where it must become purified before it is fitted for communion with the blest. Another soul he sets before him, and again he does not know whose soul it is; it may be the soul of a very lowly man —but he sees that it is sound and unscarred by being nurtured in truth, and he sends that soul straight to the Islands of the Blessed.

"In view of this," continues the old Philosopher,

"the supreme endeavor of my life is, not to win the honors of earth, but to present my soul sound and pure and beautiful and whole before the Judge. But escape from evil," Socrates again remarks in another place, "is to make myself as near like God as possible—φυγὴ δὲ ὁμοίωσις θεῷ. And if you ask me," says he, "what it means to be like God, let me say it is to be as true and as holy as I can—and this is to be as near like God as possible."

A noble vision of one of the noblest personalities that ever talked with men! Transposed into the grand organ notes of Christianity, let this great truth find echo in our lives:

"We all with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

Made ready as a bride adorned for her husband, means that our lives must be more and *more* and MORE transformed, beautified, and glorified, that they become fitted for union with the Divine Life of our Lord Himself, a union symbolized by the holy marriage bond.

Godliness is Godlikeness.

Before we speak of the qualities that go to form this perfect life, let us consider the infinite value of every life, in God's sight.

V.

The Foundations were Adorned with all manner of Precious Stones.

WORTH OF LIFE: "What makes the mud?" says Ruskin; "sand; but the particles of sand, under a higher law, form the opal. Clay; from the same particles which make clay comes the sapphire. Soot; but even soot in its perfected crystallized form becomes the diamond. Water; but water in its purity is seen in the dewdrop in the heart of the rose."

So in each life, however sinful, degraded and low, there is the divine. On this divine, God is all the time working through the personal life of Christ to transform the life into the beauty and purity of the precious stone.

I once heard that great worker among the masses, Dr. Rainsford, of New York, define love as the quality that appreciates values. A good definition. If one should bring me a gem, especially if its beauty be obscured in any way, I should fail to realize its value. Let the trained eye of the jeweler fall upon it and instantly it will detect values which I did not observe. Many a mother has said to me:

"You have my son in your class, and he is such a fine boy."

And I have thought sometimes that he was a very commonplace boy. We hear so much of a mother's exaggerated love. But I do not believe it was illusion on the mother's part; I believe that the love which has been over her boy since babyhood saw in that life what my inexperience had failed to see. If this be true of a mother's love, how infinitely more true is it of the divine love which must see the preciousness in each human soul!

'Tis very easy to love those that love us, but in lives tarnished with hate and envy, in lives polluted by degradation and sin, to see the divine possibilities which are there, that is Christianity.

The German Jean Paul Richter was right

when he put, as the highest proof of the perfect life, tenderness towards the hard, forbearance towards the unforbearing, warmth of love towards the cold.

Oh, the opportunities to bring out the beauties of life! No man, however inferior his position, can say that the value of his life is not revealed or enhanced because of lack of opportunity. Man is the master, not the slave of circumstances.

VI.

Behold I have set before thee a door opened.

OPPORTUNITY: Life is opportunity.

Before us is an open door.

Is there one, who, as he looks back over life, does not see doors which once stood open but are now shut forever?

Each day is an open door.

There is the open door of duty, the open door of service, the open door of kindness.

I meant to have told my friend of the love I feel, but he has passed into the unseen and the door is shut. A noble service I might have rendered, but I cannot recall that opportunity any more than I can recall yesterday. I am judged for it now—I am judged for it forever—eternal judgment.

The college life passes and with its close that door of magnificent opportunity is shut.

Our lives are full just so far as we have been faithful to life's opportunities.

The larger the life, the larger has been the use of opportunities.

The dwarfed and useless life is the life before which once stood open doors, but these, unentered, have been shut forever.

"And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut."

No matter how seemingly insignificant may be our opportunities, their results are beyond human understanding.

A holy legend tells of a giant, who, dwelling beside the river bank, carried over the swift current helpless children. One tempestuous night there came a small voice crying:

"Carry me across the waters!"

The giant wondered whether it was worthy the effort to cross the stream amid such a raging storm, but he took the babe in his arms and entered the torrent. Suddenly his burden grew heavier and heavier so that the giant cried in fear lest it crush him, but soon he found that the heavier became the

burden the greater grew his strength. He reached the further shore. When he gazed, the child had gone, for One stood there who looked upon him with a face of transcendent love, and said:

"Faithful servant, it seemed a little service, but forever and forever thou shalt bear the sacred name 'Christopher,' for on thy shoulders thou hast borne this night the Christ Himself."

VII.

Palms in their Hands.

ACHIEVEMENT: Not opportunity, but the use of opportunity brings success.

"Man," says a famous writer, "is the architect of circumstances. Our strength is measured by our plastic power. From the same material one man builds palaces, another hovels, one warehouses, another villas; bricks and mortar are mortar and bricks until the architect makes them something else. Thus it is that in the same family, in the same circumstances, one man rears a stately edifice, while his brother, vacillating and incompetent, lives forever amid ruins."

There is no conflict more real or heroic than life. From childhood to old age it is, and is intended to be, a struggle.

Any other conception of life than that of the hard fight, the intense daily combat to free the soul from self, is hostile to that redemption which Jesus brought.

To live as I ought demands my highest powers; and so far as I hinder the outgoing of my life or make stunted its stature or obscure its vision, just so far am I defeated in life's struggle.

I shall never forget how old scenes pressed upon my imagination as I stood within the sacred enclosure of the Altis at Olympia. I saw the Kronos hill crowded with spectators, while relatives and friends sent forth cheer upon cheer of encouragement. I saw the palm branch of victory and heard the herald's voice proclaim the conqueror's name and country. But without a struggle, of what value is the prize?

Remember Epictetus' words:

"When difficulty comes upon you, do not forget that it is God who is training you that you may become an Olympian victor, but the contest is stern and is not won without sweat."

Our eternal glory will be not to bear palms of victory, but to have conquered.

VIII.

The City Lieth Four-square.

SYMMETRY: Life's struggle must be the putting forth of all our powers, not of one merely, in the making of developed manhood.

Among the Pythagoreans the square was the symbol of perfection and of the divine nature.

Simonides pictures the ideal man as four-square, built without blame; yet in order to condone vice he confesses that it is well nigh impossible to become thus perfect.

Plato quotes the passage, and the calm thinker, Aristotle, remarks that a good man is a man four-square, since both are perfect.

I remember in dedicating a book to a ripe scholar, I chose the same sentiment as the highest

compliment I could bestow—*ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθῷ τετραγώνῳ ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένῳ*·

An old commentator on Plato, writing in Latin, says that the figure is apt because the cube is so formed that on whatever side it falls it is bound to stand erect with all its sides and angles equal, and all things in such correspondence that nothing is lacking. This is God's ideal of every life.

A cube cannot be overturned, but however it may fall, it is always a cube.

So the true Christian character is evenly balanced amid all life's vicissitudes.

IX.

The Length.

AMBITION: "The length of life," says Phillips Brooks, "is the reaching on and out of the man in the line of activity and thought and self-development. It is the push of a life forward to its own personal ends and ambitions."

Life reaches out towards something.

A life without a purpose is meaningless.

A man cannot be a real man unless he feels in his inmost soul that life is the freeing and enlarging of his powers.

First of all it is essential to know what we are going to do and then to prepare for it. So many men start with enthusiastic hopes, but fail for the simple reason that they are unprepared for the struggle.

So many, again, are ready to enter life's work, but lack of courage brings failure.

So many neglect to study the course best fitted to bring out their highest capabilities, and miss the highest possibilities of their being.

Let your reaching out be along the line where your natural powers may have the fullest development. Remember Juvenal's:

E Caelo descendit Γνῶθι σεαυτόν,
Figendum et memori tractandum pectore.

Heaven sent us "Know thyself." Be this impressed
In living characters upon thy breast.
—*Gifford.*

X.

And the Breadth.

UNSELFISHNESS: A mere line has no extension. Even the narrow tracing given it by the draughtman's pencil is a breadth which does not belong to it. So a life lost in self, however far-reaching its aim may be, becomes absorbed in the length proportion.

Think for a moment what breadth does. It converts the single line into a square. I measure ten miles, and I say such and such a thing is ten miles long, but let me measure the breadth, and my ten miles have become a hundred. I see with another vision, for I am considering another dimension. Now, just as the square is greater than the line, so is the broad life larger than the narrow life, for it sees with the Christ vision.

To be the perfect square, life must be as broad as its length.

I cannot develop the length and then make my life somewhat broad, but in just that degree in which I strive toward some great end, I must endeavor to enter into other lives.

It is not what we do for ourselves that is going to live afterwards, but how far we have become a part of other people.

Horace was right when he styled Vergil "half of his life"—*animae dimidium meae.*

"Sympathy," says Newman Smyth in his *Christian Ethics,* "is the tentacle by means of which the individual feels his relation to the social tissue, and conscience is his fully developed sense of well being in the social organism."

One summer while I was the guest of Professor Weber of the University of Berlin, I asked that veteran Sanskritist what was to him the most satisfying thing in all his years of teaching. He did not refer to the books which he had written, nor to the scholastic honors which he had won, but he answered:

"The greatest reward of my life is the fact that

your Professor Whitney in America was a pupil of mine."

He felt as all truly great teachers must feel, that even in the routine of the class room he is making men, and part of his life enters other lives.

No life is so lowly that it has not the power and the opportunity of making the world better for being in it.

XI.

And the Height Thereof.

DEPENDENCE ON GOD: Phillips Brooks again says:

"The height of a life is its reach upward towards God, its sense of childhood, its consciousness of the divine life over it with which it tries to live in love, communion and obedience."

Without the height the figure may be a square, but a square may be plotted on the earth. There is no upward dimension. As the square is greater than the line, much more is the difference great between the square and the cube. The measure ten becomes the hundred of the square, but with the height proportion it becomes the thousand.

Remember that the height of life, the dependence on God that is to stay the soul in all experiences, is not made in a day; it must be a gradual building Godward.

XII.

Are Equal.

HAPPINESS: That man has a mistaken conception of life who does not regard happiness as one of its essential qualities.

We are told that the fruit of the Spirit is joy; but true joy is not something outside of, but within, the life.

A life with the length abnormally developed is a selfish life; with the breadth out of proportion, it becomes critical and meddlesome; lost in the height dimension alone it is apt to become spiritually selfish, and spiritual selfishness is bigotry.

We ask the result of symmetrical building and we answer, "Peace."

So many think God's peace is something that can be superinduced upon a life. Even the wicked

cry "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. Peace is what is built into our lives. As Sophocles truly says:

> Nothing out of proportion can enter into life without disaster.
>
> Οὐδὲν ἕρπει
> *θνατῶν βιότῳ πλημμελὲς ἐκτὸς ἄτας·*

Plato identifies happiness with ideal life. So Aristotle pronounces happiness to be *life,* and to suppose its addition to a perfect life is as impossible as to add the quality of health to a healthy body.

To the world a man may seem happy by reason of external conditions and he may receive isolated impressions of pleasure; but happiness does not depend on the succession of experiences.

Happiness is a *state,* not a *condition.*

Realize the import of the words, "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

Horace's "Man of sound life"—*integer vitae*—not has, but *is* an armor invulnerable, and consequently needs no external panoply. So the perfect life of our divine Lord exemplified his precept:

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you."

XIII.

And the voice which I heard was the voice of harpers harping with their harps.

HARMONY: The quality of life most akin to happiness is harmony.

Ideal life is perfect harmony. But let us get no mistaken idea of harmony.

Harmony is not inactivity. An instrument gets out of tune when disused. Harmony must be attained. There must be a twisting, a stretching of the chord and a letting loose before the strings are brought into unison.

So in life. Our daily experiences of joy, sorrow, temptation, are stretching or letting loose our lives into harmony with God.

Some lives need more twisting than others. It seems often as if the chord must break when the

tension of trial is strong. But when all is over, what a grand cadence of song!

Eternal praise means that our lives will be in perfect harmony with God. The Greek word for law— νόμος —and for the musical scale is the same. I think that the first occurrence in Greek literature of νόμος applied to melody is Alcman's,

Οἶδα δ' ὀρνίχων νόμως
πάντων·
I know the notes of all the birds.

But in a sense beyond which the lyric poet intended, very true is it that every bird which trills its morning song offers harmonious music to the great Creator.

Easy is it when men applaud to do some great thing, but in the daily drudgery of the most obscure life where no eye but God's beholds, a duty faithfully done is a sweeter symphony to Heaven than the grand *Te Deum* of Cathedral choir.

XIV.

That they may rest from their labors.

DEVELOPMENT: Neither happiness nor harmony implies contentment.

To speak of reaching the goal as if it marked the limit of effort is misapplication of language. When the college year comes to its close, we say that the year is ended; when four years in college have been spent, we say the college course is ended.

We look only at the beginning and the end.

The divine idea is the end and the beginning.

I remember after the final examination at Yale, I said to a classmate, "Well, I am through; that's the last examination I shall ever pass." But what a mistake! I found there were to be far sterner tests in the larger school of life.

God is the God of activity.

Work is a universal law.

Activity is life.

Inactivity is death.

The water of the bubbling brook is sweet.

The water of the stagnant pool is pestiferous.

Rest has been defined, not as cessation of effort, but harmony of action.

Eternity is an unfolding of the life in perfect harmony with the divine will. That is eternal rest.

A foreign writer has said:

"Were I to hold all truth as a captive bird in my hand, I would open my hand and let it fly away that I might capture it again." And why? Because there is more exhilaration in the pursuit than in the captured game.

Heaven is Heaven because hope, urging on the soul, is there; and Hell is Hell because hope is not there. The inscription which Dante saw over the architrave of Hell, *Lasciate ogni speranza,* is the sad commentary on every life that has ceased to grow.

XV.

And on this side of the river and on that was the Tree of Life.

NATURALNESS: Yet growth is no sudden metamorphosis, but a natural process so gradual and imperceptible as to escape our observation.

The acorn does not become the oak in a day.

We cannot define the moment of time when the bud burst into the loveliness of the flower.

The naturalness of life is receptivity.

Divine influences are at all times entering our lives, which nourish them as the dew nourishes the flowers.

The tree of life flourished for the simple reason that it grew beside the river, and that river flowed as clear as crystal from the throne of God. So our lives draw their nurture from Christ.

They are to absorb more and more of that holy Life, just as a tree drinks moisture. Put the tree in an uncongenial soil and its leaves wither because it is not living its natural life.

A dead Christianity is a misnomer.

When a tree is dead it ceases to draw its nourishment. So when a Christian ceases to grow, the Christ influences in the soul are failing.

Ideal life is ideal manhood, and ideal manhood is the Christ life.

"The righteous man is like a tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither. The wicked are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." Do not forget that the tree makes a part of itself those elements on which it feeds.

In our spiritual life, as in our physical life, assimilation of food is effected largely by exercise.

XVI.

To him will I give of the hidden manna.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE: Life is a spiritual growth. But how much depends upon the nature of the food we take, and how we digest it!

We must not feed on anything that will create a sickly sentimentalism or a bloated bigotry.

We need the food of healthful Christian manhood.

Food must be fresh daily. Some food that was good fifty or a hundred years ago, may to-day have lost the power to nourish. Again, we require a different kind of food as we grow. There is one food for babes, another for men. But are not some Christians still feeding on the spiritual food of babes?

It is not the amount of food we take which nourishes; it is what we assimilate and make into brain and muscle. But for assimilation there must be exercise: without it the stomach becomes overloaded. In the same way, only that spiritual food which becomes a part of ourselves really benefits. An excess may produce a sanctimoniousness that is no sign of health.

All spiritual food must be converted by exercise into spiritual life.

In the development of life, every exercise or giving forth of our powers, re-acts to strengthen and broaden them. This brings us to the importance of service, which is a natural and divine law.

XVII.

His servants do Him service.

SERVICE: The ideal state, according to Plato, most nearly corresponds to a single individual. When one part suffers, the whole body feels the pain. If the finger is hurt, it is not the finger that suffers, but the community of body, and we say, "The man has a pain in his finger."

The isolated life is the life which is shut out from divine influences and is self-centred.

It is only the life of service that is the enduring life.

Thomas à Kempis is said to have been present in a company of friends, when the conversation turned on Heaven. Each one was asked to express his highest conception of the happiness of the redeemed. One replied, "They shall see His face."

Another, "There shall be no more pain." When at last the question reached à Kempis, he answered: "His servants shall serve Him." While the Greek λατρεύσουσιν implies here the most exalted form of service, yet an act of unselfish love is sweeter service in God's sight than the incense of priestly ministrations.

Look at the bar of iron; how unattractive and useless it appears; but I watch the machinist as he puts it in place in the machine, and I see it become a new creature. It throbs with life and becomes a part of a great plan.

Vast the difference! And yet there is just as great a difference between the selfish life and the life of service, as there is between the cold and repellant bar of iron and the pulsating engine. First of all our lives must enter into and become a part of the divine purpose, and then the service begun here will be an eternal service.

In a life of service all egoism or pride is excluded, because pride is the exaggerated vision of the little atom self, and a misconception of its real importance in God's world.

XVIII.

Shall cast their crowns before the throne.

HUMILITY: With the vision of the God of glory before the soul, is pride conceivable?

It is very common, as we well know, for those who have been suddenly raised to positions of affluence and power, to become arrogant and overbearing. This is due to the fact that external circumstances, becoming substituted for real manhood, often wreck life. Even the poetess Sappho exclaims:

> **Ὁ πλοῦτος ἄνευ τᾶς ἀρέτας οὐκ ἀσίνης πάροικος·**
> **Wealth without virtue is no safe companion.**

It is no wonder that the ancients believed that too great weal was hateful to the gods, that the evil eye would smite the over-prosperous, that man to-day at the top of the wheel of fortune will to-

morrow be at the bottom. Knowledge, power, riches, are useful only as they serve to enrich the soul, for nothing external can beautify the inner life.

It is impossible for a wise man to be a conceited man, since his greater wisdom teaches him his greater ignorance.

A profound scholar is the humblest of men. It is the lack of knowledge that makes conceit.

"Not to know," says a wise man of old, "is a bad thing, but it is a thousand times worse not to know that you do not know."

I remember how small the Azores seemed to me after leaving a continent, but I was told that among the little group there is one whose circumference is forty miles, and a trading steamer touches its shores once a month. Many have lived and died without ever leaving their tiny home. Their world has been just that narrow radius of land. But smaller still is God's world to him who sees only himself and has no vision of infinitude.

The large life is the life which, having entered into God's eternal plan, has become a part of other lives.

"I know all the Vedas by heart," said Kûtadanta, "but have not found the truth."

Buddha answered:

"Learning is good but it is not all-sufficient. True wisdom comes by practice of the great truth that thy brother and thyself are one. Follow in the exalted path of righteousness and thou shalt find that while there is death in self there is immortality in truth."

Humility is not an ornament, but an essential quality of a perfect life.

Humility is no degraded idea of one's true worth, but rather the exalted conception of self as a co-worker with God.

XIX.

Madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign upon the earth.

LEADERSHIP: If we are co-workers with God, we shall necessarily become leaders.

It was a wise provision of Cecil Rhodes to stipulate in his will that the quality of leadership should be a consideration in the selection of candidates for his Oxford scholarships. A young man without leadership is like the dumb sheep that follows the flock. As Quintilian says:

"One can never become the equal of him in whose steps he is satisfied to walk, for the man that follows must be forever behind"—*Necesse est enim semper sit posterior qui sequitur.*

While it is true that one should always be willing to ask and receive advice, yet he must reach his

own decision and act with resolution. A Caesar resolved to rule, and even this cognomen (Kaiser, Czar) is to-day the synonym of royal authority. A Napoleon's ambition gave the name that designates highest worldly success, for "Napoleon of finance" is more than a prosperous business man.

Leadership means the overcoming of obstacles in the effort to reach the front.

It matters not what is our work, but how we perform it.

Far better to be a first-class cobbler than a second-rate lawyer.

The hewing of the stone is just as important as the building of architrave or cornice.

He who is faithful in the drudgery of his ordinary work-a-day life is just as much a leader as he who wears a kingly crown.

To do our best in what we have to do is to be kings and priests unto God, for our Lord will not ask us "What have we done," but His criterion of judgment will be, "Have we been faithful."

Earth's heroes may be those who have done great deeds amid the blast of trumpets and the acclaim of multitudes, but God's heroes are those

who, perhaps unnoticed and unseen, have stood steadfast for the right.

Leadership must not be confounded with stubbornness.

Incompetent and faithless is the commander who, if he makes a false move, does not immediately do all he can to retrieve his fortune.

The man who makes mistakes is not necessarily the man who makes a failure of life. Like the giant Antaeus into whose limbs were infused renewed vital powers each time he touched the earth, he rises more a master for every fall.

It is he who is persistent in, or repeats, an error, that fails.

And again, whatever may be our success or achievement, life, without the love of God in the heart, is, as the Apostle says, "but sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." I beg of you, remember this.

XX.

Her light was like unto a stone most precious as it were a jasper stone.

LOVE: A life may be artificially symmetrical; so is the block of ice, but the block of ice is cold.

What makes the gem beautiful? If we take it into the dark, there is no lustre which it gives forth, but it appears dead as a lump of coal or a clod of earth. It is God's sunlight which makes it sparkle and glitter and become transcendently beautiful.

Is not this just as true of life?

What the light is to the gem, love is to life. The Christ love must enter the soul to transfuse and diffuse its holy radiance.

Eckermann in his Conversations with Goethe —*Gespräche mit Goethe von Eckermann*—says:

"The Christian religion has nought to do with philosophy. It is a mighty potentiality in itself—*sie ist ein mächtiges Wesen für sich*—by which suffering and sunken humanity is raised Godward."

Shall we let the flowers, the hills, the stars, reveal God, and our lives be like the dismal sod? No, a thousand times, no. Let them be like the jasper stone, radiant with love, fitted for God's city.

Kant—*Metaphysik der Sitten*—defined duty towards God as duty towards men.

Here is Gordon's splendid definition of immortality:

"The life eternal is the life of absolute love realized in the personal capacity of man."

So fully had the immortality of love become a conscious reality in the lives of those who had entered into the spirit of their Lord that they assert, "We know we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren."

You remember the legend of St. Veronica—how as the Saviour passed, she bathed His bleeding

face with her napkin, and suddenly on the cloth there appeared the countenance of the holy Christ.

Behind that legend there is a beautiful truth. Every act of unselfish love leaves on the soul the Christ likeness which will be as eternal as God is eternal.

XXI.

Clear as Crystal.

SINCERITY: Herodotus states that among the Persians, the Lie was considered the greatest disgrace. In fact, King Darius himself on his own Behistan Inscription identifies morality with truth; and in over forty places within three hundred lines speaks of the evils of deceit.

Professor Harnack—*Das Wesen des Christentums*—regards as the two points of Christ's precepts which cover the entire range of morality, *purity*—in its most comprehensive sense of abhorrence of what is untrue and unholy—and *brotherly love.*

Our lives must be absolutely true or they are nothing.

Some have the wrong idea that a lie depends upon the mere verbal language.

Remember that a lie is an intentional false impression.

Socrates says that even to speak improperly leaves its impress on the soul.

A hypocrite is not necessarily one who intentionally deceives another, but often it is one who has deceived himself; who has gotten in his heart that *real* lie which Plato distinguishes from the verbal lie.

It is Plato, again, who gives us as the precept of his great master that we should desire not to seem, but to be, the best.

"Whoever," says that noble teacher, Professor Blackie, "in any special act, is studious to make an outward show, to which no inward substance corresponds, is acting a lie, which may help him out of a difficulty perhaps for the occasion, but, like silvered copper, will be found out in due season. Plated work will never stand the tear and wear of life like the genuine metal. All flimsy, shallow, and superficial work is a Lie of which a man ought to be ashamed."

XXII.

And before the throne as it were a glassy sea.

BEAUTY: It has been suggested that if we could analyze the beautiful, the true, the good, to their very essence, they would be found to be but three-fold phases of the same great reality. Old Ben Jonson's,

"How near to good is what is fair,"

is more strongly put in Sappho's stanza:

'Ο μὲν γὰρ κάλος, ὄσσον ἴδην, πέλεται (κάλος)
'Ο δὲ κἄγαθος αὔτικα καὶ κάλος ἔσσεται·

Who is beautiful, as far as seeming goes, is fair,
But who is good will soon be beautiful as well.

Can our lives be beautiful and be filled with pride, prejudice, envy, hate?

Our thoughts are the food of the mind.

Our minds are vigorous or diseased as we feed them with healthful or morbid thoughts.

In childhood I used to look through the fragments of an old bottle of yellow glass, and the blue sky and the green grass seemed pale and sickly. So many souls are like the yellow glass. Envy colors a life and stains the clearness and beauty of the divine by the morbid light of hate and greed.

Beauty is the reflection of love.

In my rambles through Greece I stood one day on the old Scironian Cliffs. The waters of the Saronic Gulf beneath were sparkling with a myriad of hues and were almost as transparent as the clear Oriental atmosphere. All colors of the rainbow seemed resplendent in them, changing and interchanging as the angle of light varied or as the breeze moved over the surface of the waters. Here, on a spot that was bristling with all that was ghastly in Greek legend, I saw a vision of the God of Beauty.

The sea of glass is the image of human life—sin-stained or degraded—but purified and beautiful when it takes into itself and reflects the holy love of Jesus.

Let the Litany petition be our daily prayer and effort:

"From all pride, vain glory and hvpocrisy; from envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, good Lord, deliver us."

XXIII.

Arrayed in white garments.

PURITY: Behind all metaphor, we see in the application of these words to the perfect life the spotless Christ image on the soul. The Apostle saw that into the Holy City there could enter nothing that defileth or worketh abomination. So into the perfect life there can come no impurity of thought or word or act.

No life, as Carlyle says in his Essay on Burns, can be benefited by a mud bath.

Suppose a young man spends five years of his life in dissipation, can he take back those five years at the end of twenty? Can he take them back at the end of fifty? Can he take them back forever?

Herder, in his *Postscenien zur Geschichte der*

Menschheit, puts purification of life and the consequent enlargement of the soul as the real present palingenesia.

True are the words of Persius:

"Purity of the inner life—*sanctos recessus mentis*—is an offering far more acceptable to heaven than all which the dish of great Messala's blear-eyed son can hold."

Every impure thought or deed becomes, as the Greek poet Aeschylus says of wrong-doing, a parent of unholy and numberless progeny. Like Frankenstein, that wierd creation of Mary Shelley —we send them out into the world and into life, creatures of depravity and death.

Often, very often, we should repeat the prayer that "We purify ourselves even as He is pure,—that we may be made like unto Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom."

No impure soul can stand in the Holy Presence.

Christ has told us that it is the pure in heart which shall see God. This is communion.

XXIV.

God Himself shall be with them.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: True life is a constant and increasing communion with God. Such communion is faith. In fact, let me define faith as friendship with Jesus, a trust in His personality.

Watch friendship as it develops in a life. It is not made in a day. The friendship of a year is one thing, and the friendship of fifty years is another.

I have a friend in boyhood and I love him with the love of boyhood.

I have a friend in manhood and I love him with the love of manhood. The same friend in old age is entitled to and must receive that trust-

ing and intelligent love that all the years of friendship have brought.

"Uncle Hiram," they said to the dying man, "You will soon be with God."

"Be with God!" came the confident reply; "why, I have been with Him all my life."

Friendship with Christ, communion with God, must mean more and more to a life as it moves onward. Every friend must become a part of my life, and friendship with Christ must stamp the Christ image on the soul.

How irregular are the bits of glass that make up the cathedral window, but let the sunlight shine through, and in what before seemed so rude and shapeless we see the form of saint, or Madonna, or the holy face of Christ Himself.

Life may seem just as irregular, yet let the Christ friendship shine through it and it becomes transformed and glorified.

Communion with God now, communion with God forever, that is life.

XXV.

They shall see His face.

GROWING FAITH: If faith is communion with God, it cannot be a mechanical thing.

Faith is not a Procrustean bed, nor is faith like a garment which one must put on. Such a faith would be a manufactured faith, and might chafe us here and gall us there.

Faith is nothing artificial, but it is something living and growing.

My faith of to-day must be broader, fuller, and more satisfying than my faith of yesterday.

There is a faith of childhood, beautiful and confiding, but it is the faith of childhood. The faith of manhood must be augmented and tested by all the years have brought.

Knowledge is to grow more and more complete.

Plato's simile of the cave is a good illustration of our imperfect knowledge. In a dark den only shadows of real objects appear and men confuse the shadow with the real. Let them be brought into the light and stand on some high eminence in the presence of the sun; their eyes would be blinded and their sight would be clearer in the darkness. They would think the illusion of the cave truer than actual vision.

There are two kinds of blindness. The entrance into the dark and the entrance into the light. So the perplexities in regard to matters of faith that come to college students are often but the uncertainties of vision that mark the entrance into the light. Our lives at first are like the cave, but light enters gradually and we grow into the knowledge of God.

The child faith passes into the more intelligent faith of manhood until we come into that perfect light where we behold our Lord with undimmed vision.

Perhaps the strongest point in the work of the German scholar, Professor Herrmann—*Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott*—is the clear exposi-

tion of how the Christian's vision of God through the personality of Jesus saves from mysticism.

Believing about a person does not necessarily influence a life.

I may believe that Napoleon studied at Brienne in 1779-'84, that he opposed Paoli in 1793, that he concluded the peace of Amiens in 1802, etc., etc., and yet what influence would Napoleon have on my life? But ask one of the Old Guard, "Do you believe in Napoleon?" and you will hear him answer:

"Believe in Napoleon? Why, he is my leader. I have been with him. I was with him at Marengo, at Austerlitz, at Jena."

What is the difference between myself and him? I knew facts—perhaps more than he—about Napoleon, but he knew his personality and that personality had become the all-pervading influence of his life. In the same way, historical statements about our Blessed Lord are theology, but the Christ influence in the life is religion.

XXVI.

Golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints.

PRAYER: Prayer is life-long communion with God, a communion which brings our will into such accord with God's will that we are convinced of receiving our request or something transcending it.

I remember Professor Henry Drummond giving me a good illustration of prayer. He told of how a little girl was crossing the ocean and lost her doll into the waters. She went to the Captain and begged him to stop the ship.

"No, my little girl," he said, "I can't stop this ship for your doll."

But the child thought him a hard, cruel captain not to stop the ship for her doll.

Some time later a man fell overboard and the great engines, which had been ceaselessly at work since the voyage began, stopped. A boat was lowered and a life was saved.

When the vessel reached the haven, the first thing the Captain did was to buy the most beautiful doll in all the city for the little girl.

So in life's voyage our prayers may not be answered in the way man's judgment would dictate, but they are all as treasures stored in God's city and we shall find a rich fulfilment when we reach the shore. Yet even here and now, if the divine wisdom sees fit, He who holds the helm of the universe can surely reverse the lever.

XXVII.

Him that overcometh.

TESTED MANHOOD: The only part of man's nature that is valuable or permanent is the part that has been tried and tested. God must distinguish between the innocence that has never been brought to trial and the proved and tested manhood.

The divine law is that of achievement.

What converts the soft and flabby flesh into sinew and muscle?

Practice.

What makes the mind vigorous and penetrating?

Practice.

And is the soul an exception to this law?

How, I ask, does character become strong, heroic, and grand? The answer is the same, By practice.

The fir-tree of the north, on whose head have rested the snows of winter, and which has braved the shock of wind and tempest, stands as if in conscious might it owned no other master than the Master of the storm; but how weak and puny the sheltered hot-house plant that drinks only the sunlight and the dew into its existence.

For a toy steamboat there is no need of great iron fastenings, but as for the trans-Atlantic liner, ribs of steel bind it about, since it was made to do battle with wind and wave. Is this not far more true of human life, whose voyage is into the eternities?

There is just as much difference between the life which takes the great forces about it into itself and turns them in the right direction and the life which does not, as there is between the ocean steamer and the mill-pond boat.

I remember when I first saw the rock of Gibraltar. There was a great storm and the waters were a seething mass of foam. Through the mists we could discern—faintly at first—the rock standing

as it has stood throughout the centuries, a silent sentinel of two seas and two continents. It stood there because it had defied wind and tempest, while other material more vacillating and unstable had been swept into the sea. And I thought of the old hymn that has brought comfort to so many hearts, and will be sung as long as life has sorrows:

"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes.
That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never, forsake."

XXVIII.

A pillar in the temple of my God.

CHARACTER: The Doric pillar is the fundamental form of Greek architecture. It stands for support. The Greek taste would not allow ornamentation on a supporting structure. With an exception like the archaic temple of Ephesus, where the relief on the pillars is probably a survival of the custom of covering wooden beams with bronze plates in repoussé, it is the rule for no Greek temple to admit of columnar decoration. Where the entablature is light, sculptured columns may not be out of place; but how incongruous to adorn a shaft which bears the burden of architrave, triglyphs, metopes, and matchless pediment sculptures!

Everything spoke of strength and stateliness.

The worshipper must have felt the impress of power as he entered the shrine of his divinity. The Doric column, we see, is beautiful, not for external ornamentation but for symmetry in proportion and perfection in workmanship. So in life.

It is not the ornamental life that counts.

Life is not something brilliant and transitory, as the meteor's flash which goes out in a denser darkness. That may be man's idea, but God's idea is the stately column, strong, complete, majestic, beautiful.

The Greek pillar was not made grand and stately in a day. Years upon years man was at work trying to erect a shaft worthy of God's temple. In the same way life is not made symmetrical and beautiful by any sudden process.

It is the way we are living to-day that will fit us for the higher life to-morrow.

I remember President Dwight saying that the most satisfying thing of his ten years' presidency of Yale, was to meet the old graduates, and see the character which the years since graduation had stamped upon their faces.

Eternity means limitless unfolding.

As I live now, so I am preparing myself for larger, richer, fuller development.

What is it that converts the rough stone from the mountain quarry into the shapeliness of the temple column? It is the sculptor's chisel; but this chisel has to cut deep and hard.

Character—χαρακτήρ—in its etymology is a cutter, a graver, an instrument always employed with violence. So the mallet moulds the hardest stone into the proportions of a Doric shaft.

Does not human life need much, very much, moulding to be brought into Christlikeness?

Some lives seem to need more than others. But remember that it is the stone which has been most hewn and shaped that becomes transformed into the pillar of the most beautiful symmetry.

XXIX.

Out of the Great Tribulation.

BLOWS OF CHARACTER: What are the blows of character on the soul? They are so frequent and so varied that only the individual life can know them all. Yet we speak of some of the commonest.

In babyhood they begin. The child cries as if the little heart would break, when the toy is smashed. How trivial this seems to us who have gone on in life, but to him how real!

So all earth's trials will seem exceeding small when we look back on them from the experience of the larger life.

In childhood's griefs, do we not have an illustration of how good God is? He is taking that

life which is just begun in the world, and by these little worries is fitting that life for the sterner trials, the deeper sorrows, which the life must meet before it ends.

A young man leaves his home. There comes the blow of homesickness. Although nearly eighteen years have passed, I shall never forget the heartache when I left my home to enter college. But suppose I had said:

"I'll ward off that blow. I'll not let it strike, I'll always be sheltered by the love of home."

Would not my life's column have been unsymmetrical?

Then when the young man goes out into the world, he is bound to feel at first that he is not appreciated as he should be.

I do not believe there is one who at some time in his life has not felt that the world failed to value him as it ought. But lack of appreciation, imagined or real, does more for the soul than the plaudits of men. It teaches that first great lesson which every true life must learn, that men may ridicule, critics may censure, but if the soul is conscious before God of doing what is right, it stands on a foundation as solid as the ages.

Why, if I bend my life to suit the varying verdict of men or to win popular applause, which often is a very easy thing to do, but a very cowardly thing, I should be like the tree gnarled and twisted by the storm, and not the straight and stately pillar.

Then come the blows of temptation. How thick they rain upon the life!

All temptation is not the same.

It is no temptation for me to gamble or to drink; but have I the right to suppose that because I refrain from those things which are really no temptation to me I am thereby testing my character?

To another life these may be stern trials, striking hard on the soul, to mould it into symmetry. It is very true that each one has his peculiar besetments.

Let me ask myself:

"Am I free from envy? Do I show more and more the Christ love?"

These are questions that may come home to my soul, and right here God will judge my life, as to what part has been tested and proved.

Think of the blows of affliction! Does it not

seem that life's slender column must break? But those heroic characters that stand out so grandly are those who have been tried by suffering; for even in regard to the Son of God Himself we read that it became Him to make the Captain of our Salvation perfect through suffering.

XXX.

The gates shall not be shut.

THE WELCOME: In the Roman Forum, at the north entrance opposite the temple of Vesta, was the old arched gateway or door, itself the representation of the Roman atrium. We remember that this temple of Janus, as it was called, was never shut in time of war. A beautiful thought originally lay behind this. Here it stood as the entrance to the city's hearth, the city's home. The king, the father of the state, and relatives and friends,were fighting far away; but just as the door of the home stood open for the absent father, so the doors of the city's home were open wide to receive those who should return in triumph.

Our life is a warfare, but it is an inspiring

thought that the gates of the eternal home are standing open for us.

"The gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day, for there shall be no night there."

"O sweet and blesséd country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blesséd country,
That eager hearts expect!
Jesu, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest!
Who art, with God the Father,
And Spirit, ever blest."

[The End.]

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